



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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REP. MARK SPREITZER VOTES TO ADDRESS SEX OFFENDER LOOPHOLE

MADISON—Today, State Representative Mark Spreitzer (D-Beloit) voted in favor of AB 539, a bill that would protect local communities from having to house other communities' most serious sex offenders. The bipartisan bill was supported by a majority of state representatives and aims to close a major loophole in state law that negatively impacts local communities.

"Our communities thrive when they are safe for everyone," said State Representative Mark Spreitzer. "This bill gives local communities a voice. It works to ensure our corner of the state remains a great place to live, work, and raise a family."

Under current law, there is nothing local communities or law enforcement can do to prevent a serious violent sex offender from being placed in a different community after the offender has served his or her sentence. Recently, this loophole in state law allowed a judge in La Crosse County to place a serious sex offender from La Crosse in Beloit. At no point were Beloit residents given a say in the offender's placement.

Rather than sending their most serious sex offenders to another community, AB 539 requires the sexually violent person's county of residence to find an appropriate local housing option. This bill eliminates the ability of a court to place a sexually violent person outside his or her home county. It requires the person's county of residence to form a committee to determine the best housing option in that county.

AB 539 passed the Assembly in a roll-call vote. Its companion bill, SB 446, still needs to make its way through the Senate. If voted in favor by a majority of state senators, it will then head to the Governor's desk for final approval.

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